LC/NAIROB

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ECA/RCIWD/CAU/4
August 1984

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace/Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development

Arusha (Republic of Tanzania)
from 8 to 12 October 1984

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN, 1976--1985

F O R E W O R D

This paper is based on the work of Dr. Hilda Kokuhirwa and Ms. Faithful R. Renner, both as consultants for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The Review and Appraisal was prepared on the basis of the information the two consultants collected in five member States, as well as at the headquarters of the ECA, in Addis Ababa, where many government documents are available.

A more comprehensive report based on the studies submitted by the two consultants will be published at a later date.

INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution 3010(XXVII) of 18 December 1972, had as its goals equality, development and peace with emphasis on education, employment and health. The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (WPA) adopted in Mexico in 1975, directed at the governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system, was aimed at achieving the Decade's goals. The Plan of Action outlined the major priority areas as regards the situation of women.

2. In 1974, one year prior to the World Conference in Mexico, African governments at the Regional Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development with Special Reference to Population Factors held in Addis Ababa adopted the Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Africa. This Plan, which was later incorporated into the World Plan of Action in 1975, stipulated specific developmental areas for emphasis in order to accelerate the pace of integration of women in development in the Africa region. The implementation of the Africa Plan of Action, therefore, implies the realization of the World Plan of Action and the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women in so far as it applies to African countries.

3. The General Assembly Resolution 3520(XXX) of 15 December 1975 on the World Conference of the International Women's Year, called upon Governments to take appropriate action to implement the World Plan of Action including:

(a) The establishment of short-term, medium-term and long-term targets and priorities to this end;

(b) The adoption of national strategies, plans and programmes for the implementation of the recommendations within the framework of the overall development plans, policies and programmes;

(c) The undertaking of regular reviews and appraisals of progress made at the national and local levels in achieving the goals and objectives of the World Plan of Action within the framework of the overall development plans, policies and programmes.

4. Towards the end of the Decade in 1984, the Economic Commission for Africa took the responsibility to review and appraise the achievements of the Decade particularly on the extent to which it has contributed to the acceleration of the integration of African women as contributors to, and beneficiaries of Africa's development.

5. The Review and Appraisal of the United Nations Decade for Women in the Africa Region was undertaken by ECA with the assistance of consultants from the Region. It consisted of an extensive examination of relevant documents in the various socio-economic development sectors of African countries at ECA Headquarters. Visits were made to selected member States: Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia where discussions, interviews, and consultations were held with several national leaders, planners and policy makers, including leaders of national machineries for women as well as representatives of women beneficiaries of activities undertaken during the Decade at various levels. The review also involved field assisment of some of the programmes and projects which have been implemented during the Decade.

6. In addition, the review included an examination of obstacles and constraints to progress in women's equal participation in the development of African countries. Some of these obstacles apply generally to the development process in African countries. Others, however, stem from historical and socio-cultural practices which have been discriminatory against women. Finally, some recommendations and proposals for future action beyond the Decade have been made.

7. This report is divided into the following sections:

I. Development Plans and Strategies

II. National, Subregional and Regional Machineries on the Integration of Women in Development

III. Women's Participation in Various Sectors of National Development

I. Development Plans and Strategies

A. Regional

8. Women and development cannot be viewed in a vacuum but as an inseparable part of global and regional social and economic forces. Ever since the WPA was formulated, attempts to implement it have been jeopardized by worsening socio-economic conditions, especially during the first half of the United Nations Decade for Women. The population of Africa has been expanding at an average annual rate of around 2.8 percent, whereas the total food production was rising by no more than 1.5 percent. Food self-sufficiency ratios dropped from 98 percent to 86 percent implying that each African had around 12 percent less home-grown food than twenty years earlier. High and fairly constant fertility levels and declining infant mortality rates were producing a young population and concomitantly high dependency ratios of nearly 3 people per employed person. Average estimated life expectancy at birth was 47 years for males and 50 for females. 70 percent of the total estimated population lived in the rural areas, in conditions of abject poverty. This led to continuous rural-urban migration and problems attendant on high rates of urbanization unsupported by adequate socio-economic planning and the provision of amenities. Health and living standards were deteriorating or stagnating in most places. The expected industrial "take off" had not materialized. Africa's technological output was a mere 0.9 percent despite the vast natural resources on the continent. Moreover, transportation and communications infrastructure remained rudimentary, inadequate and expensive for the functions they were expected to perform.

9. The intellectual ferment generated by these conditions led to a series of new development emphases and strategies devised to bring some lasting solutions to the socio-economic development of the African continent. The New International Economic Order (NIEO), Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries (TCDC), the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN), the UNIDO Conference on Science and Technology and the Vienna Programme of Action, the Industrial Development Decade in Africa and the International Development Decade Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade are among the alternative development strategies calling for a reconsideration and modification of approaches and the adaption of new ones to bring about accelerated socio-economic growth and development. These new development emphases have had

significant implications on programmes and strategies for African women during the Decade. More than ever before the full participation of women was being advocated and pressed for as essential if the goals of self-reliance, acceleration of the process of growth and diversification, eradication of mass poverty and unemployment were to be fulfilled. Progressive albeit minimal acceptance and recognition that women were critical rather than marginal to their countries development and that any restructuring of the socio-economic situation could not be fully achieved without women's inputs were taking place in some countries of the region.

10. The Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa (LPA) of April 1980, came at the mid-point of the United Nations Decade for Women. It stemmed out of the need for African countries to adopt a strategy best suited to their own situations, having realized that previous developmental concepts and approaches had not brought any significant improvement in the quality of life for the people of Africa. The LPA emphasized achievements of increased measures of self-sufficiency and self-reliance; economic integration and cooperation among African countries; establishment and support of national, subregional and regional institutions to facilitate the attainment of self sufficiency and self reliance.

11. It also stressed increased food production to enable African countries to feed themselves; the development of industries, natural resources, trade, transport and communications, full development and utilization of human resources, building up adequate and scientific and technological base and ensuring its appropriate transfer and application to all areas of development. Thus women as contributors to, and beneficiaries of Africa's development efforts, are an important element in the implementation and achievements of the goals of the Lagos Plan of Action.

12. This review and appraisal of the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women is integrally linked to the principles laid down in the LPA.

B. National Development Plans

13. Though some attempts at change have been made in some countries, at the national levels most development plans and policies tend to reflect a static traditional perception of women's role in development as being largely social, with women as passive receptors of benefits. In some countries development plans appear to be at varience with declared commitments to involve women in the development process in general. In some instances women's programmes are concentrated in the social sector even though development plans stress the participation of all in all spheres of development. Even in rural areas where women's needs require a more diversified and agro-based approach, plans for women are heavily weighed on the side of social services. The proliferation of national machineries located in ministries of social affairs or junior ministries like youth and sports confirm this trend.

14. In some countries notably Algeria, Burundi, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Libya, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, and Tunisia, attempts have been made during the Decade to include women in decision-making bodies such as national assemblies, national policy-making bodies, national machineries, and research institutes. But in other areas, the political climate remains unreceptive to the inclusion of women's in policy-making. In addition, structural rigidities and financial constraints have also inhibited the implementation of the World Plan of Action, in spite of the existence of political will and stated commitments to integrate women in development at policy and planning levels.

15. Policy implementation at the higher levels follows a similar pattern, with a few countries having a notable number of high-ranking women among this cadre of officials. In most countries women predominate in the lower administrative ladder involved in carrying out routine work.

Obstacles to progress

16. The main obstacles to progress in all plans and policies directed at women are connected with:

(a) inadequate data for planning and inclusion of women's needs

(b) structural inhibitions

(c) human, material and financial constraints.

Plans and recommendations

17. In view of the fact that research is crucial to development planning and the adoption of appropriate strategies and that short-sighted planning has located programmes for women in the realm of social affairs where they have no access to central planning bodies, it is recommended that:

(a) Countries which have not already done so should establish research centres which would provide relevant data and information needed for the planning and elaboration of strategies for the improvement of the status of women and their participation in the development process.

(b) The strategy enunciated by the LPA urging ECA member States to establish complementary structures such as women's units in planning ministries and commissions to feed and monitor national development plans with data on women and to integrate a plan of action in national strategies should be adopted in countries which have not already done so.

(c) As a long-term policy, it is recommended that the teaching of civics in schools and training centres should contain sections devoted to leadership training with emphasis on the part both men and women could play in decision making. Moreover, teaching material should be revised or devised to meet these goals.

(d) A short-term and long-term policy of giving women, especially those in the rural areas, representation in policy-making bodies should be initiated in countries which have not yet done so.

(e) To minimize the problems encountered by structural inhibitions, it is proposed that plans and policies for women be diffused among all the ministries involved in the development process. In other words, a female component should be introduced into all ministries or commissions rather than locating all projects for women in one machinery with limited human and material resources or in structures dealing with so many other interests that plans related to women fail to receive the required attention, focus and direction.

(f) In addition, as a long-term measure, it is recommended that quotas for women's activities be incorporated in overall financial allocations made to ministries or executing bodies in the country.

II. National, Subregional and Regional Machineries for the Integration of Women in Development

18. The World Plan of Action recommended the establishment of appropriate machineries and administrative structures at national and regional levels to facilitate women's full participation in development. Following this recommendation significant progress has been made towards establishing the necessary administrative and organizational machineries at regional, subregional and national levels.

19. Prior to the adoption of the World and Africa plans, the Pan African Women's Organization was established to co-ordinate and encourage activities of women's organizations throughout Africa and to address itself to problems related to the economic, social, political, legal and natural conditions of African women, on which themes it has organized symposia, seminars and meetings, with the financial and moral support of the OAU. PAWO has also given political and material support to African liberation movements. The OAU further has plans to establish a women's unit within its general secretariat.

20. Since the adoption of the Africa plan, regional structures and organizations have been established under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Following its precursor, the Women's Programme, the African Training and Research Centre for Women was established in 1975 to assist and encourage member States of the Economic Commission for Africa to integrate women fully in the development process of African countries. The African Regional Co-ordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development was inaugurated in March 1979 as an advisory body on women's programmes at the regional level.

21. At the subregional level, the ECA established the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) in 1979, whose primary function is to promote intercountry cooperation through multi-national and multi-sectoral programmes and operational projects. A network of five subregional committees for the integration of women in development has been organized to work through these MULPOCs with the objective of decentralizing and strengthening the field activities of the ATRCW at the subregional levels. The establishment of these structures is indicative of the efforts made at the regional level to implement the Africa Plan of Action.

National Machineries for the Integration of Women in Development

22. At the national level, the Africa Plan of Action, recommended the establishment of national commissions on women and development supported by technical secretariats to undertake research, to formulate projects and programmes, and in general to seek the integration of women in all sections of economic and social development.

23. The response to this recommendation by African countries has been positive and encouraging. By 1980, at the Decade's mid-point, most of the countries in the region had established some kind of machinery to deal with the situation of women. These machineries have taken the forms of women's bureaux, commissions, ministries, units within sectoral ministries or wings of national political parties. In most countries, however, these machineries are located or associated with

ministries or bodies responsible for social development. Very few machineries are located or have access to ministries of planning or similar bodies. Most of them are pyramidal and hierarchical in structure. They comprise small planning and administrative units at the top or central level, staffed by ministerial, commission or party political personnel, including experts in various fields of competence. These are supported by middle level executives at office, regional or district levels. At the base of the pyramid are monitors and animators, as well as a number of unpaid volunteers in both urban and rural areas. The technical competence of some has been strengthened and updated by numerous national and regional seminarsand workshops organized by ECA/ATRCW since 1976.

24. The functions of these machineries include the following:

(i) mobilization of women for participation in national development;

(ii) initiating projects and co-ordinating the activities of existing women's groups;

(iii) collecting, analysis and disseminating data and information on the position of women;

(iv) sensitizing and lobbying governments, policy makers and the general public on the role of women in national development;

(v) participating in the formulating, implementation and evaluation of governmental policies as they relate to the needs of women;

(vi) liaising with international and nongovernmental organizations.

25. Some progress has been made by national machineries in a variety of fields. These include attempts to lower the rate of illiteracy among women, establishment of nursery schools, provision of training for out-of-school girls and rural women, and in some cases refugee women.

26. In Morocco, female school drop-outs have been re-integrated into the mainstream of formal education. Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Burkina Faso have introduced girls to scientific, technical and vocational training hitherto closed to them. In some countries a number of income-generating activities and employment opportunities have been created for women through cooperative societies which have been established or strengthened. Technologies which have cut down the time formerly taken up by arduous household chores have been introduced as have devices to process and preserve foodstuffs.

27. Health programmes have been strengthened in a number of areas. Malnutrition is being tackled successfully in some countries and plans are underway to make such projects self-sufficient. Mother and child services have increased. Handicapped and abandoned children have been rehabilitated Immunization programmes

have been launched. Kenya has established a family-law centre which provides counsellingon legal rights to women.

28. Slower progress has been reported in the attainment of the goals of equality of opportunity for women in employment, conditions of work and raising of their status generally. Practically all these machineries have received political sanction and backing. In some countries governments have provided human, material and financial support to national machineries. In others, however, political backing has not been matched by the needed financial and administrative provision.

Obstacles to progress

29. A number of constraints impede progress of national machineries. The location of so many of them in ministries or bodies which receive secondary attention from policy makers accords them a low status and imposes restrictions on their effective functioning. Acute shortage of human, financial and material resources that so many of them are presently facing places serious limitation on the implementation of targeted projects and programmes, and this implies failure in meeting the stated needs of women for which the machineries were created. Some machineries are plagued with the lack of technical competence which inter alia affects their role as co-ordinating bodies for activities of other women's groups as well as international organizations. All of this,coupled with a lack of firm commitment in the ranks of some high ranking officials in some countries minimizes the effectiveness of national machineries.

Recommendations

30. In view of the pivotal role which national machineries are designed to play in the enhancement of women's positions and opportunities, it is imperative that these bodies be placed in strategic areas where they can monitor national trends and seize all relevant occasions to advance women's interests.

31. Although political party machineries may be useful for mobilizing the masses and winning political support from governments to which they are affiliated these gains are likely to be transient in view of the frequent political changes in many African countries. It is thus recommended that in addition to this all governments consider the idea of establishing units responsible for women's matters as integral parts of state structures. This can be done in one or two ways.

(a) The establishment of ministries for the advancement of women which have interministerial support as obtains currently in a number of countries. In addition, these machineries should be directly linked to planning ministries or cabinet offices.

(b) The creation of women's components in all existing ministries where women can monitor development trends and ensure that women's concerns are included in all projects planning and implementation. The problem of funding would also be minimized by these means.

32. National machineries should work closely with other institutions so that they can take advantage of the available resources within these institutions. In addition, they should be provided with the technical capabilities through appropriate training of their cadres or deployment of more competent ones from other national structures.

33. In terms of operation the machineries should avoid drawing up ambitious programmes but should set more realistic and achievable goals within the limits of their resources.

III. Women's Participation in Various Sectors of National Development

A. Agriculture and rural development

34. The African economy is primarily based on agriculture which employs the majority of the African population especially in the rural areas. Since the seventies, however, many African countries have been experiencing low agricultural growth and productivity, resulting in the necessity for increasing food imports. The situation has been worsening over the years, so much so that the food crisis is presently an issue of great concern to the Region.

35. African women have always taken a very active part in agricultural production particularly in Africa south of the Sahara where it has been estimated that women form 45.9 percent of the total rural working population, the highest ratio in any developing region. The proportion of women who are actively engaged in the rural areas could be higher considering that women in Africa start working at an early age and continue to be active beyond the age of 65.

36. Although in some cases women's contribution to agriculture is increasingly being recognized, this recognition has not been sufficiently followed by policies and action to improve women's work and increase their productivity. Their participation is still difficult to quantify since existing agricultural statistics does not usually disaggregate data by sex.

37. The Africa Plan of Action emphasized the importance of developing programmes for integrated rural development to increase gainful employment opportunities for both men and women and the improvement of rural infrastructure. It also stressed the need to:

> "Recognize the major role of rural women in the agricultural and marketing sectors, and provide training, equipment, village technology, public transportation, water and other facilities to increase their productivity and to improve their lives and the lives of their families and societies".

38. The Lagos Plan of Action, which came in the mid-Decade, recognized the vital role that women play in the development of the Region and especially in solving the food crisis in Africa, one of the priorities identified in the Plan. The Plan recommended that governments should take necessary steps to make use of women's potentialities, reduce their tasks, render their work more productive and accord a higher priority to their training and employment in the rural areas. The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development equally stressed the fact that the recognition of the role of women is a necessary condition for the success of rural development planning and the implementation programmes.

39. The translation of the above recommendations into action during the Decade has been slow. In most parts of Africa women are still mere beneficiaries, albeit in a marginal way, than planners or agents in rural development. Policy planning and the adoption of strategies for action remain in the hands of men, not only at central or divisional levels but also on the farms. There are very few instances where efforts have been made to include women in planning and designing agricultural projects.

40. Women's access to land varies from one system of land tenure to another. But in most African societies, despite the predominance of women in subsistence agriculture and their growing number in the agricultural and rural based industries, women's access to land is still governed by traditional land-holding practices and division of labour. In countries, such as Egypt and Libya, where governments have introduced agrarian and land reform to ensure equitable distribution of land, women have not yet been able to exercise their full rights to land ownership. In some countries, such as Ivory Coast and Senegal, women are progressively losing access to land for subsistence agriculture. Others are forced to emigrate from their ancestral homes because of the introduction of settlement schemes which militate against their interests, as in Burkina Faso. In countries where attempts have been made to establish collective farming schemes and co-operatives in the rural areas, such as Burundi, Morocco, Senegal and Tanzania as well as the resuscitation of agricultural cooperatives as in Egypt and Sudan, women's access to land has been greatly improved. Women's participation in agricultural cooperatives is a recent phenomenon and still on a limited scale.

Women's Access to Agricultural Extension Education and Training and Information

41. Available data indicate that most agricultural extension services are directed at cash crop production which men dominate. Few women get access to extension services even though they grow much of the food consumed in all homes, particularly in the rural areas. Efforts are being made by such countries as Senegal which provides agricultural extension services for women through rural extension centres monitors. In Morocco such services are made available to women through the Ministry of Youth and Sports in collaboration with the Union of Moroccan women. However in most countries extension education and services for women is limited to home economics with emphasis on home-oriented tasks and responsibilities.

42. Women have not fared any better in getting access to agricultural education and training. Few women have been reading for degrees in agricultural science. Even in countries where women are pursuing this course, it is only in Egypt and Algeria that over 20 percent of the students enrolled in 1979 and 1980 were female. In Senegal by 1983 only 10 percent of women working in agricultural

fields had university degrees. In some countries a notable increase is being made in the access of women to diploma and certificate courses in agriculture.

Access to agricultural inputs, credits, and services

43. Despite increased funding of agricultural and rural-based projects by some African governments, women have had limited access to such inputs as fertilizers, seeds, implements and credit. These are mostly directed to cash crop production while women are primarily engaged in subsistence farming. In a few countries, however, efforts have been made to provide women with the needed inputs. In Senegal Fonds d'Action pour la Femme (Women's Action Fund) has facilitated women's access to seeds, decorticators and fertilizers.

44. A number of cooperative banks and financial institutions are beginning to encourage savings among women so that it becomes easier for rural women to borrow and obtain credit. The Agricultural Finance Company of Zambia is an example of such an institution. At the regional level, the African Regional Agricultural Credit Association (AFRACA) set up a women's programme in agricultural credit and banking to assist women in obtaining credit in order to promote their role in rural development. The Kenya Women Finance Trust Limited was founded in 1981 with the aim of encouraging women who have no financial resources to participate in the money economy. Many women's groups and cooperatives have obtained credit from the Union of Women of Tanzania's (UWT) revolving fund for women's groups, administered through the Tanzania Rural Development Bank.

Access to appropriate technology

45. African women are still using largely time consuming and outmoded tools for farm and household tasks. In a number of countries efforts have been made to improve this technology through the joint efforts of national machineries, relevant ministerial groups and international agencies to provide cheap, simple and technologically appropriate tools for women. These implements have reportedly given rural women some extra time to devote to other activities in some areas. Such implements have included improved stoves and ovens and the use of solar energy. Other appliances have constituted sources of income for women, namely mills, decorticators, oil presses, storage cribs and solar driers. The Karen Appropriate Technology Centre in Kenya was established in 1976 to develop appropriate technologies for use in the rural areas. Their water jars and improved stoves have become popular among villagers in some parts of Kenya.

46. In some areas, however, women's access to appropriate technology has not been without problems for the target groups. In Ghana improved fish smoking ovens were operating below their full capacity because their had been a failure to make simultaneous improvements in the fishing techniques of male fishermen.

Prototypes of improved oil presses, rice threshers, winnowers, dehullers, groundnut and maize shellers, cassava and coconut graters as well as hand tools produced by research institutes in Sierra Leone are still beyond the reach of many women in the rural areas. The technology from the Karen Centre is not yet available to most rural women in Kenya. The high costs of these labour saving devices and, at times, the fact that they are inappropriate to some places and the limitations imposed on women's access to credit facilities are among reasons why these technologies have not been widely diffused among the women and rural communities.

47. Women in the region have not had access to tractors or mechanized technology in agriculture. When UNICEF made rice-planting machines available to women in the Casamance region of Senegal, the men took over the machines and women continued to grow rice in the traditional way. Most of the mills introduced in rural areas of Senegal and Sierra Leone to lighten women's labour in food processing were either appropriated by the men or men converted to their own use much of the profits made from the mills. Similarly, when Taiwanese technical aid personnel introduced "wet rice" planting techniques in Liberia, men were paid to participate in the project, but women continued to grow rice in the traditional way.

48. To lighten the gloomy picture a ray of hope has been raised by the great strides which have been taken in African states most severely affected by drought and fuelwood shortages. Sahel states members of CILSS, as well as some land locked ceuntries have adopted a number of strategies to provide women with improved technological amenities. Governments through national machineries and relevant ministries have embarked on reafforestation campaigns, well digging, construction of dams, irrigation canals and mass media campaigns advocating economical usages of water and use of alternate forms of energy. In the Gambia a Ministry of Water Resources and Environment was created early in 1981. In Senegal the scheme "Operation une femme une gramme d'or" was initiated to ensure sustained water supplies. To provide fuelwood, the "Fria Law" in Guinea has turned all important family ceremonies into occasions for planting trees. Since 1979, Senegal has introduced "Operation one woman, one tree. ECA/ATRCW, and other United Nations agencies, through seminars and workshops, have helped provide women with greater access to information on these facilities.

B. Education and Training

48. With regard to education and training, the Africa Plan of Action recommended short-term compensatory programmes for women and girls in literacy, numeracy, and non-formal education programmes; training of rural women in modern agriculture, fishing, cooperatives and business; reforming of school curricula; providing guidance and counselling for boys and girls about employment opportunities and revision of educational materials to fit national needs and to facilitate attitudinal change.

50. Review of the progress made during the Decade indicates that despite governments' efforts to offer more opportunities to women in education and training and official non-discriminatory policies, the goals of the Plan are still far from being fully achieved. The education of women still lags behind that of men from primary to university level; inequalities in curricula and enrolment still exist. Girls continue to be offered more of the home-oriented rather than employment-oriented subjects.

51. Although there has been a tremendous upsurge in the percentages of girls in primary education for the African region as a whole, from 35 percent in 1960 to 39 percent in 1970 and 43 percent in 1980, the enrolment figures in some African countries are still quite low. For instance as late 1982/3 the percentage of girls in school in Chad was 27 percent, 32.6 percent in Guinea Bissau, 36 percent in the Gambia, Upper Volta and Niger. Yet many countries have made determined efforts to increase enrolment at the primary level as witnessed by their development plans and the fact that primary education is free in a number of countries. Girls are still a long way from matching male enrolment figures and dropout rates for them are still higher.

52. Recent studies and field interviews revealed that girls are still considered of lower investment potential as compared to boys. Not surprisingly, as education ratios in selected countries show, boys are still preferred over boys when purse strings are tight and there is a choice to make between sending girls and boys to school particularly beyond the first level.

53. Female enrolment in secondary schools has increased since the sixties when most African states became independent but not as significantly as at the primary level. During the Decade a big gap still exists between girls and boys' enrolment in secondary education.

54. As regards technical education, many African countries have stressed its importance in national development. However, girls are virtually excluded from technical education. Technical secondary schools for girls do not exist in many African countries, and the number of girls who enrol in the existing ones is still very low. In Kenya in 1982 girls took 'O' level examinations in technical education at only 3 technical schools and, their performance was poorer than that of boys. In 1978 30 girls were enrolled in two technical secondary schools for the first time in Tanzania while 20 were enrolled in the Dar es Salaam Technical College.

55. Although there have been efforts to encourage girls to take science and technical subjects at the secondary level, for the most part, girls are still heavily oriented toward the arts. This has an influence in shaping girls educational and career patterns. The types of courses taken at any level of education have an influence on the type of higher education, training or employment pursued after school. As such, it is necessary to examine much more deeply how the structure of courses and subjects offered at secondary and high school certificate levels influence and orient the aspirations and expectations of the women who take them.

56. Of those female students enrolled in vocational colleges here too the majority were oriented toward traditional female subjects. In a few countries, such as Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, women are being introduced to non-traditional technical subjects related to agricultural techniques, electronics, carpentary and metal work.

57. The percentage enrolment of women is smallest at the university level. The few women enrolled at the university level are concentrated in the faculties of arts and related fields. In those faculties requiring science concentration for admission, female representation is relatively low.

58. Once girls have been enrolled in the educational system they are confronted with a number of problems which make their survival rate lower than that of boys. Parental attitudes, socio-economic needs, pregnancies, early marriages and lack of opportunity for further education and training are some of the factors responsible for the low rate of survival among girls. The curricula offered at the primary and secondary levels seem to merely prepare students for further education rather than equipping them with practical skills in preparation for adult roles. Since women are the majority of those who dropout, they are usually ill-prepared for adult roles as well as for the formal employment sector.

Functional Literacy and Vocational Training

59. Women still constitute the majority of the illiterates in most African countries. According to the 1977 United Nations estimates, illiterate women in Africa constituted 88.5 percent of the population 15 years and above in 1960 and 83.7 percent in 1970. It is little wonder women outnumber men in literacy classes.

60. Most countries in the region have recognised the need to combat illiteracy and have made strenuous efforts to reduce its rate through literacy programmes and campaigns. The functional literacy approach has been adopted by several countries for its potential of teaching relevant skills and knowledge related to the daily lives of the people.

61. Besides national literacy campaigns, other non-formal education programmes have been organized under various institutions and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. Such programmes in which women have participated include: leadership training, agriculture, cooperatives, small scale industries, food storage and preservation, improved methods of cooking and animal husbandry.

62. Efforts to extend nonformal vocational and technical training to women both in the rural and urban areas have been made, but the demand for this type of training for women and young girls has not yet been met. Voluntary organizations have played a significant role in this respect.

Obstacles to progress

63. In this sector the main obstacles to progress have been: (1) traditional, religious, and cultural practices and attitudes which have militated against equal access of girls and boys to educational opportunities, (2) the structural rigidities in African educational systems which have resisted much needed changes and reorientation; (3) fewer places for girls in secondary schools and limited scientific and technical facilities for girls which inhibit their participation in science and technical fields; (4) financial constraints which prevent governments from implementing reforms in school curricula and providing more and better educational facilities for girls and adult women; (5) household and farm responsibilities which often necessitate the withdrawing of girls from schools and the high dropout of women from adult education programmes; (6) poor infrastructure in the rural areas which puts many potential participants out of reach of educational programmes, (7) lack of guidance and counselling for school girls on career and employment opportunities.

Recommendations

64. In order to eliminate some of these constraints it is proposed: (1) governments should endevour to provide more and better educational facilities for girls with emphasis on scientific and technical education, and career guidance and counselling should be made available to help girls make better choices; (2) literacy and adult education programmes should be intensified and there should be a co-ordinated effort by government and non-governmental bodies, including women's national machineries; (3) training in relevant and functional skills should be included in primary schools to equip those girls who dropout with employment-oriented skills; (4) educational and information campaigns should be organized to sensitize parents, communities, policy-making and the general public on the need for equal access of girls and women to educational opportunities; (5) there should be clear policy on how to deal with school pregnancies, and how pregnant girls could be rehabilitated.

C. Health and nutrition

65. During the Decade many countries in the region have been striving to meet the health needs of their citizenry. Several countries have introduced primary health care programmes (PHC). A number of countries (Sudan, Kenya, Gambia, Algeria) have stepped up training of paramedicals such as health visitors, midwives, and community health workers. The number of health training centres have increased in some countries. In others (Sudan, Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania) more attention has been given to the provision of health facilities and services to rural communities. Sanitation has been improved in some countries through campaigns against environmental pollution. In others emphasis has been laid on promoting

preventive health services through stepped-up immunization and vaccination campaigns and services. The importance of nutritional services through Maternal and Child Health programmes have been recognized by several countries. Several countries have developed strategies and others are in the process of being elaborated, to contain population growth. Countries such as Egypt, the Gambia, Morocco, Ghana, Tanzania, Zaire, and Zambia have given their support to family planning programmes. Much emphasis has been laid on the importance of clean water supply and many governments are already taking measures to provide water to the people, not only in the rural areas but also in the cities where population growth has outstripped the capacity of existing facilities. International agencies such as FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO have provided substantial assistance and support to a number of health and nutrition programmes in many countries.

66. Women have benefited from the health and medical services offered especially in the rural areas. MCH, family planning and nutrition programmes have been largely directed to women and children.

67. These achievements, however, should be no cause for complacency, as the health and nutritional problems in African countries are far from being satisfactory. Most people still do not have easy access to modern medical facilities. Mortality rates in Africa continue to be high especially among children under the age of five. The health sector is still getting a very small proportion of the total national budget. Medical and paramedicals remain in short supply and the few that are available are concentrated mainly in the urban areas. The number of patients per physician is very high, and variations between countries are wide with North Africa having the lowest ratios and some countries south of the Sahara having the highest ratios in the region.

68. Realization of the importance of nutrition is not yet widespread. Malnutrition among children and poor nutrition habits among pregnant and lactating mothers are still problems which need to be tackled from many dimensions. Women and children suffer most in this situation.

69. A number of obstacles have contributed to slow development in this sector. A number of African countries still relegate health and nutrition to social welfare and do not consider it as an important component of socio-economic development. This affect decisions on resource allocation to this sector as compared to others. Ignorance, illiteracy, taboos regarding women, and customary practices constitute the biggest stumbling blocks to effective implementation of health and nutrition programmes. Poverty makes it difficult for many families to avail themselves of facilities especially when they have to be paid for. The imbalance of income and provision of facilities and services between urban and rural areas has also left a number of communities out of reach of these facilities.

70. <u>Recommendations for Future Plan of Action</u>

- Intensification of education both formal and non-formal for women;
- Food production should be stepped up by providing technology and inputs to women;

- Governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations should pay more attention to the problems of water supply;

- There is a need to improve infrastructure, train more manpower and provide more funds in order to make health and nutritional programmes more widely spread;

- More women should be involved in formulating health and nutrition policies because they are the major implementors and beneficiaries of these policies.

D. Employment

71 Although women's participation in this sector still remains inadequately quantified and available indicators still fail to measure a whole range of jobs performed by women and data to feed into these indicators that have been devised in recent years is still hard to come by, studies of women's labour force participation and field visits to women's employment sites in some African countries indicate that an increasing number of women have been drawn into the labour force during the last decade.

72. Statistical data released by UNDP in 1980 reveal that Africa has by far the highest proportion of economically active women. In 10 countries out of 42 this proportion is over 45 percent as compared to between 46 and 62 percent for men. The lowest percentages for women's economic activity rates recorded are those for Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Cape Verde and Niger. Low percentages of women's labour force participation is due at least in part to cultural ideas and attitudes and traditional concepts and not necessarily because women are not economically active. Moreover, the low figures may be a reflection of the growing numbers of women who are now self employed or engaged in the informal labour sector, both of which are generally not quantified.

73. Some developments such as male migration and the deterioration of the refugee situation in Africa confirm the greater numbers of women in the labour force. This has resulted in marked increases in the number of women forced to earn their living to support their families and the growth in the number of female-headed households.

74. Agriculture still plays a central role in the employment situation of African countries, and women contribute an estimated 60 to 80 percent of the agricultural work including subsistence food production, animal husbandry, market gardening, food processing, and distribution. They also play roles complementary to those of men in plantations and cash crop production. It has been estimated that the number of women engaged in agricultural and rural enterprises has risen to over 75 percent in some cases in the 1980s where it was only 49 percent in the 1970s.

Women's participation in wage employment:

75. Available information regarding women's employment in most African countries indicates that there is no policy discrimination between men and women in wage employment, and that labour laws provide for equal pay for equal work and for equal treatment between men and women. However, in most countries men still dominate wage employment. Specific efforts aimed at improving women's access to and their status in wage employment have been slow. Overall, women are still concentrated in the low status and low paying services sectors such as teaching, nursing, social work and secretarial jobs.

76. Because of limited education and training opportunities coupled with home-oriented curricula traditionally offered to women, their modern sector labou- force participation is limited. They comprise about 15 percent of workers in this sector. Women are rarely found in managerial and executive positions where planning is done and policies formulated. In countries where women have had greater access to educational opportunities and job-related benefits and services, such as maternity benefits, employment pensions, social security and trade union memberships in their own right, their access to employment opportunities has improved correspondingly.

77. The informal sector plays a key role in the employment situation in most African countries, particularly in the urban centres. At a time when the employment situation in the formal sector has more or less stagnated, employment in the informal sector has grown considerably. Women are better represented there partly because jobs in this sector do not require certification. The scale of enterprise in the informal sector is small and limited, using simple technology. Women are usually self-employed as petty retail traders in handicrafts, bakery, tailoring, brewing, and food vending, or they are hired as cooks, barmaids and house-maids. In West African countries women predominate in processing, distribution and marketing particularly of foodstuffs and clothing. For example, it has been estimated that 80 percent of women in Ghana, over 60 percent in Nigeria and Benin are traders, from small scale to merchant enterprises. Regrettably, their participation in most cases is defined as "not classifiable". In a few countries (Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Tunisia and Upper Volta), pilot projects have been introduced in non-traditional fields for girls such as electronics, metal work and typewriter repairing.

78. In some countries, governments, national machineries and non-governmental organizations have made efforts to mobilize women through women's groups spread throughout the rural areas and some urban centres. These women groups have obtained support from government and non-governmental organizations to start income-generating activities. The performance of some of these groups has been quite commendable. The main income-generating activities have involved handicrafts, poultry raising, textiles, farming, shopkeeping, small animal husbandry, grinding mills, operating restaurants and brewing local beer. National women's organizations, religious organizations, foreign governments and international organizations have contributed generously toward these activities of women's groups. In Kenya,

Maendeleo ya Wanawake has more than 6,500 women's groups with over 100,000 members. The Kenya Women's Bureau channels financial assistance from governments and other donors to the women's groups to support their income-generating activities. The Small Industries Development Organization of Tanzania has done significant work in rural and urban areas by providing the necessary training and technical support for individual enterpreneurs. In Nigeria, the age-group women's associations and religious groups provide a framework for initiating development oriented activities such as building day care centres, initiating literacy programmes and income-generating activities. The Oodi Weaver's project in Botswana is another example of a successful village level industrial experiment that has considerably improved the income-generating potential of women and the well-being of a whole community. The establishment of women's cooperatives and women's multipurpose centres especially in the rural areas has been one of the gains made during the decade in many countries of the Region.

79. The performance of these women's groups, however, has been seriously affected by many problems: Poor planning and management of resources, lack of managerial skills and proper guidance because of the high proportion of illiteracy among the group members; lack of initial capital for starting programmes; inadequate marketing opportunities for their commodities; lack of protection usually provided by ministries of industry to other manufactures; and lack of regulation leaves them subject to the exploitation of middle men.

Obstacles to progress

80. The lack of relevant education and training is one of the major factors affecting the status of women in employment. Lack of managerial and administrative skills, the dual roles women have to perform in the home and on the job which affect work performance and influence attitudes of employers, lack of social support services for employed women, societal and structural rigidities all hinder women's access to available opportunities.

Recommendations for future action

81. Any future strategies to overcome the obstacles to the full participation of women in employment both in the rural and urban areas must consider the recommendations spelled out in the Lagos Plan of Action regarding women and development. Actions to be taken to solve the problems of African women should not be marginal and separate from those taken to deal with overall development. Some African governments have already acknowledged the importance of giving special attention to women, and strategies to this effect have been adopted at national, subregional and regional levels. Actions to implement these strategies, must therefore be stepped up.

82. In rural areas some of the most recent and significant measures adopted by African governments include those aimed at creating new job opportunities and

diversification (rural and industrial development) and those aimed at regulating the supply of labour (educational reforms, population planning and international migration). Action in this direction should be intensified.

F. Law and legislation

83. With the proclamation of International Women's Year (1975) and the declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women, (1976-1985) the public at large has to some appreciable degree become conscious of the unequal status of women. Efforts have been made at various levels to improve the status of women and to guarantee them equal access to available opportunities. Such efforts can be assessed through the ratification of the various United Nations conventions on women by different countries and promulgation of national legislation on employment, maternity protection, marriage, inheritance and property, education, constitutional rights and various policy pronouncements and directives. Most African countries have enshrined in their constitutions the principles of political, economic, social and civil rights for all their citizenry-men and women.

84. In theory, the written laws and constitutional provisions do not discriminate against women. It is the practice and implementation of these laws which are discriminatory. The implementation of statutory laws is to a high degree influenced by cultural beliefs and practices, customs and prejudice. The customary laws which regulate the various ethnic groups, and the civil laws which were introduced during colonial days in many cases operate simultaneously. The interrelated influences of these laws often conflicting and confusing have been held responsible for slowing down the progress of women toward equality in the region.

85. As a result of pressure and lobbying by women activists through national machineries or other influential bodies, a number of laws have been enacted and others amended during the Decade, to give more equality to women. Countries were such positive steps have been taken include Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

86. One of the major achievements during the Decade has been the granting by many countries of paid maternity leave to women employees, irrespective of their marital status. Since 1975 Tanzania has granted 84 days paid maternity leave to working women every three years. Kenya grants two months maternity leave with full pay while Nigeria allows 12 weeks of paid leave. Zambia too enacted a law in 1983 granting a 90-day paid maternity leave to working women every three years. In some countries also give women time off during the working day to nurse infants.

87. Policies to ensure equality of educational opportunities have included the introduction of universal primary education for children and functional literacy programmes for adults. Females have been the major beneficiaries of these programmes. Another change introduced to increase the enrolment of girls into secondary schools is that of "positive discrimination (or "affirmative action", as it is called in other regions) whereby the passing mark for girls is deliberately lowered so that more girls can qualify for selection. Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia have introduced

such policies. In federal schools in Nigeria, one-third of the total number of students in the co-educational colleges must be women. As regards university education in Tanzania, women have direct entrance but men have to work for two years before being admitted.

88. Some laws which, because of their close relationship with traditional culture and practices, have generated lengthy debates and controversy in parliament and other forums. Such laws relate especially to marriage and divorce, inheritance rights, property rights, child custody and maintenance.

89. Some countries (Zambia, Senegal, Nigeria and Egypt) have set a minimum age for marriage for both boys and girls. The girl's age is usually lower than that of boys. Many irregularities still exist, even in those countries where some changes have been effected. For example, in Senegal, women may not be employed without their husband's permission. In Morocco women cannot receive maternity benefits without their husband's permission, and the husband can abrogate his wife's contract if she chooses to work without his permission. In some cases, laws have not changed fast enough to keep pace with social, economic and political realities. The income tax law of Zambia subjects women to higher taxes than men under the unrealistic assumption that it is men who meet family expenses. In other countries women are not entitled to housing allowances even where they earn a higher salary and occupy a higher position than their husbands. Thus, although generally the laws may not discriminate against women as individual citizens under marriage the discrimination may take the form of considering the couple as a single entity and the woman as an appendage to the husband.

Obstacles to progress

90. Among the obstacles to progress in the area of women's rights are:

- lack of awareness by women of their rights and entitlements under various laws;
- contradictions between customary and statutory law;
- traditional values and practices concerning the roles and status of women;
- attitudes of those who are in control of institutions;
- financial and social constraints which prevent women from seeking redress of injustices;
- misinterpretation of religious notions about women's status, i.e. those contained in the Bible and the Koran;
- underrepresentation of women in legal and policy making bodies, i.e. in parliament and in the cabinet or in the party executive committees.

91. In some cases, women's silent submission to and acquiescence in the discriminatory laws against them for fear of public reproach or ignorance, particularly in the rural areas and among illiterate women, makes it difficult to harness their support in reforming legislation in their countries.

Recommendations for plan of action

92. The following actions are recommended for this sector:

- educating both men and women about their legal rights through mass media, the schools and existing men's and women's groups;
- law reform institutions should critically review those laws which discriminate against women so that immediate action can be taken for their repeal;
- public consciousness raising about women's issues through campaigns by women's organizations and units is essential for women's full integration into development;
- legal counselling should be readily available to women and information about such services should be disseminated to them;
- women should be involved in decision making at all levels especially in the rural areas where most women live;
- research is needed on traditional and customary values and beliefs which deny women equal access to opportunities.

- In countries which have not already done so a law reform commission should be set up consisting of both men and women, to examine and reform existing contradictions in legal provisions and all discriminatory legislation and administrative procedures against women.

- Pronouncements and resolutions by governments regarding the improvement of women's status should be supported by concrete actions in legislation, policy, services and inputs.

F. Political participation and international cooperation

Political rights

93. In law women enjoy equal political rights with men in most African countries. In the majority of African countries, women have the right to vote and are eligible for election to public office where they can exercise all public functions. However, despite this equality of political rights in law, women still play a minor political role at all levels. They participate mainly as voters while they very rarely get elected to public office. For instance, a 1978 survey in Tanzania showed that only 6.5 percent of village managers were female while there was not a single woman village party chairman or secretary. At the national level, out

of over 200 members of Parliament elected in 1980, less than 15 were women. Among the 158 members of Parliament elected in 1983 in Kenya, only one was a women; two other women were appointed to Parliament. There are few women judges, directors of institutions and managers compared to the number of men in these positions.

94. Women's organizations have played a major role in mobilizing women for participation in national development. In some countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania and Zambia, women's organizations have been given political backing through recognition as national mass organizations. In Algeria and the Sudan, women's unions have been very active in their efforts to recruit women into politics at the grassroots level. In Burkina Faso agitation during the Decade resulted in the appointment of a woman secretariat of State for Social Affairs. Despite the low participation of women in electoral and appointive politics, women have been actively involved in political struggles for independence. Taking examples from countries liberated since 1975, women fought together with men during the wars for liberation and they have made significant contributions to nation building. In South Africa and Namibia, women continue to play important roles in the fight for independence.

95. African women have also actively supported of freedom fighters and refugees through financial, moral and material contributions. Women in the frontline states, for example, have been actively involved in various programmes for refugees. The Zambia Women's League has supported a training programme for SWAPO and ANC women based in Lusaka by providing necessary resources including personnel, materials, funds and buildings.

International cooperation

96. The participation of women in international affairs is very closely related to their participation in national politics. During the Decade, there has been some increase in women's participation in major international and regional OAU and United Nations meetings but very few of them head delegations. There are very few women directors of departments or of ambassadorial rank within the ministries of foreign or external affairs.

97. At the regional level, the establishment of the Pan African Women's Organization, the Africa Training and Research Centre for Women, the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC), and subregionally the establishment of a network of subregional committee on the integration of women in development under the ECA MULPOCs has greatly increased the participation of women in international affairs.

Obstacles to progress

98. The situation of women in political life is comparable to that in education and employment. The reasons for the low positions of women in education and employment account for their low participation in politics as well. The sexual division of labour confines women to household activities while men have more mobility and leisure. Domestic and farming activities impose a severe limitation on women's participation in extra familial duties and responsibilities. Cultural beliefs that politics is for men have also limited women's participation in political life.

99. Limited education and training have also affected women's participation in political and public life. Women's lack of self-confidence in applying for high-level and competitive positions is also an obstacle deeply rooted in the self-ingrained into them through years of socialization.

Recommendations for future action

100. The following actions are recommended:

- Since attitudes, customs and beliefs and traditional values play an important role in limiting women's participation in politics and public life, there is need to raise societal consciousness about the crucial roles played by women in society and the need to involve them in decision making and leadership at all levels. All the available media should be used to inform and educate the public about the situation of women. Women's issues should be included in the agenda for meetings, seminars and workshops on subjects such as rural development, population, employment, health and nutrition, and agriculture and food production for men and women.

- School curricula should be revised to reflect new values about women.

- Political education, leadership training, decision making skills, assertiveness and self-confidence should be part of nonformal training programmes for women in order to enable them to participate in leadership and decision making. Women's organizations, in collaboration with other agencies, could initiate such programmes.

- Considering the fact that women are the majority of those who live and work in the rural areas, they should have equal representation on village level councils and committees to enable them to participate in leadership and decision-making. Women's organizations, in collaboration with other agencies, could initiate such programmes.

- Considering the fact that women are the majority of those who live and work in the rural areas, they should have equal representation on village level councils and committees to enable them to express their views and participate in decision-making.

- Women's organizations, through women's groups should carry out campaigns to mobilize and educate women so that they can use their numerical potential to vote for competent women candidates who should represent them and advocate their rights.

Mass Media and Communication

101. The Africa Plan of Action expressed concern about the images that media portray of women and the under representation of women in this important sector because of its influence on public consciousness. By its portrayal of women, the mass media can either impede or foster women's integration in the development process.

102. Despite the fact that the mass media is a relatively new development tool in parts of Africa, and the numbers of radio and television receivers per 1000 inhabitants is wholly inadequate, it has played a tremendous role in all parts of Africa in sensitising society to the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. This is particularly so in countries such as Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo, where the mass media have long been vehicles for the dissemination of new information. Interviews, special articles in newspapers and publications such as "Famille et developpement" in Senegal, for example, have popularized projects such as improved stoves and driers which have eased the daily drudgery of rural women. Radio and television programmes have introduced a number of items devoted to women. Special articles have informed the literate public of developments in the bid to enhance the role and status of women at national, regional and international levels. A number of special publications devoted to women in the region have been initiated as a result of the Decade.

103. The Africa Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) has undertaken research on the portrayal and representation of women in the media in the region. The ATRCW has also held study tours for women journalists to enhance their appreciation of the issue of the integration of women in development. In collaboration with the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, the Centre has produced a motivational film on national machineries for the integration of women in development.

104. The portrayal of the image of African women in the media has not always been positive. Case studies on Sierra Leone, Niger and Egypt on women and the mass media have all emphasized the fact that mass media tend to concentrate on the traditional image of African women as housewives and mothers. In other countries women are projected largely as beneficiaries of social services, that is, as social liabilities, or a passive group playing supportive roles to male members of society rather than as active participants in development. In some cases only women at high-levels are featured to the near total neglect of women in the countryside. The images that the media project of women serve to foster, in both men and women, negative attitudes toward women and also to re-inforce traditional expectations which confine women to traditional roles.

105. There are positive developments, however, in some countries. In Senegal a journalist attached to the acts as liaison officer between the machinery and the mass media. In the **Burkina Faso** the National Federation of Voltaic Women have a half hour programme in all the major **dialects** on the national radio. In Ethiopia women are frequently portrayed as active participants in national campaigns to promote the goals of the revolution. In Morocco, the Women's Union and the Ministry of Social Affairs are pressing for a more positive media portrayal of image of women.

106. In terms of employment of women in the mass media, available information indicates that although women may be employed in all sectors of the mass media, they are in the minority. Most women hold lower level posts rather than influential positions as editors, producers, broadcasters and managers which would enable them to influence mass media policy toward women. A very small number of women work in reportorial and editorial positions.

Obstacles to progress

107. Among the obstacles to progress in this area are:

- Paucity of qualified women in the mass media to act as a pressure group, especially at the decision-making level.

- Limited coverage of the media, especially the print media, makes it inaccessible to certain groups of the populations, including the illiterate and rural communities where women are the majority.

- Societal attitudes toward women and women's expectations of themselves play an influential role on the manner in which the media potrays women.

- Conflict between journalism as a career and the traditional demands on women as homemakers.

Recommendations

108. To overcome these obstacles it is recommended that:

- The mass media should highlight the importance of women's contributions in non-traditional spheres in order to help shape positive attitudes towards women and to encourage women to assume new roles in their societies.

- The mass media, particularly radio which is easily available to the majority of the people in the rural areas, should be utilized more effectively to transmit education, knowledge and new skills to large numbers of women who live in rural areas.

- Existing training institutes in mass communication and journalism should increase the number of women trainees. Women's issues should be included in training curricula of these institutes. On-the-job training of women as preparation for higher responsibilities should be encouraged.

- Career guidance and counselling in schools should include journalism as one of the possible careers for women.

H. Research and Data Collection

109. Following the proclamation of the Decade for Women a considerable amount of research on women's issues has been carried out at various levels. At the regional level ATRCW has sponsored and undertaken action-oriented research, collection and analysis of data and dissemination of information on African women, in several African countries on such topics as women and food production, law and the status of women, employment, education and training, women and industry, women and the media, and traditional technologies. The Centre tries whenever possible, to use national researchers and research institutes to strengthen research capabilities in the region. It encourages national machineries to establish research units in their structures to undertake research and to identify and utilize existing research results related to women in their countries. ATRCW has served as a clearinghouse on women and development in Africa by disseminating research results through the publication and wide dissemination, free of charge, of research studies, annotated bibliographies on African women and development, conference and workshop reports, newsletters, posters and illustrative publications.

110. Another regional organization involved in research on African women and development is the Association of African Women for Research Development (AAWORD), a continent-wide network of African women researchers formally established in 1977. AAWORD was formed as a result of increasing concern among African women researchers with the trends and problems of development in Africa and the need to decolonize research on issues concerning African women and African development.

111. In addition, several United Nations organizations, notably the FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO, have carried out several studies and surveys on various issues concerning African women, followed by action programmes. Bilateral organizations have sponsored numerous research projects on women in Africa.

112. Except in a few countries of the region research and data collection on women are not well developed. Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Libya, Mali and Tunisia have established research centres for women. National level research on women have, in most cases, been carried out by academic institutions, individual consultants and sometimes by special research groups on women and development such as the Women's Research and Documentation Group based at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. National machineries have generally commissioned researchers to undertake research on their behalf.

113. The question of women's participation in development has received increasing attention during the Decade. The number of research reports, published and unpublished, the number of papers presented at conferences, workshops and seminars, the increasing number of journals, newsletters, projects and funds for research from various international organizations all demonstrate the efforts made to study women's situation as it affects and is affected by the development process during the Decade.

Obstacles to progress

114. Among the difficulties regarding research on women and development in the region are:

- Lack of financial and competent human resources. In this connection several women's organizations have expressed concern over foreign "experts" who are sponsored by international organizations to do research on women in Africa countries, sometimes for academic purposes. Often, reports on research findings are not sent back to those countries where the research was done but to the organizations which sponsored the experts. This type of research does not benefit African women who are used as sources of information.

- Available demographic surveys and censuses rarely provide statistics which are broken down by sex; as a result it is difficult to assess the actual contribution of women to national development and to identify areas for action relevant to women.

- The full involvement of women as active participants in the research process is still lacking. Women participate primarily in research as informants. What women have to offer as experts in their own areas is often ignored. Data that has been generated on women so far is quite abundant. Unfortunately, it is only a small number of people who have access to this data because it is written in languages and forms that the majority of the people cannot easily understand, especially considering that the majority of women are illiterate or semi-illiterate.

- Lack of coordination among the various organizations, units and individuals carrying out research on women within the region which results into duplication, contradictions and waste of efforts.

- Paucity of publishing facilities for disseminating information to a wider audience.

- In view of the general neglect of women in planning for development at all levels, research on women as contributors to development has not received the attention and support it requires from government planning institutions.

7. Recommendations

115. The following are recommendations for future action:

1. National machineries for the integration of women into development should be supported and strengthened so that they can have the capacity to carry out research or to sponsor and coordinate the work of other institutions in research and to disseminate research findings to planners and policymakers who can use them to effect change.

2. The areas identified for study on women by the Regional Plan of Action and the Lagos Plan of Action should continue to provide a guide for research on African women.

3. If women are to benefit from research carried out in their favour, they must be involved not only as givers of information but also as active contributors to the research process. Women should be involved in identifying and analyzing their problems from their own perspective and eventually seeking solutions rather than adopting recommended solutions for which they had no input.

4. Research findings should be made available to policymakers and field workers so that they can translate the findings into policy and action. The women and society at large who are affected by the problems researched should be enlightened on the findings so that they can use them to their advantage. Research findings should be summarized, simplified and translated into local languages so that the majority of the people can understand them. All available media especially radio, should be utilized for disseminating knowledge gained from research.

5. There is a need for national machineries to establish documentation/information units where basic data on women in respective countries can be found. The ATRCW, in collaboration with UNESCO and other international agencies, could help in the training of documentalists who would develop information/documentation units within the national machineries.

6. The disaggregation of statistical data by sex should be encouraged to identify areas of action relevant to women in all areas of socio-economic development

The Decade and Beyond

116. In summary, the United Nations Decade for Women in Africa has witnessed:

a) an increasing awareness among the public of the unequal status of women in society and the crucial roles they play in development;

b) generation of information on various women's issues by researchers;

c) a more scientific approach to the examination of women's issues;

d) the initiation of programmes and projects for improving the status of women by governments, national machineries, United Nations agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations;

e) formation of women's machineries, bureau, units, departments and ministries;

f) formation of women's professional associations such as research groups, women in the media, woman in business, etc.;

g) an increase in fora for discussing women's issues and planning strategies such as workshops, symposia, seminars, conferences, study tours.

117. The Decade has served a very important function of preparing the ground for action. The Regional Plan of Action, the Lagos Plan of Action, and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhagen, 1980) have all acknowledged the integration of women in development as one of the factors in and means of accelerating economic development. Plans and strategies for this integration have been laid out. It is the implementation that has been slow. The years following the Decade should witness accelerated efforts to translate the plans into action in the immediate, short and long term. To this effect, the following actions are recommended:

a) Action plans should be more specific to include defined targets indicators and deadlines, and they should be broken down into implementation periods of one year, two years, five years, and ten years etc. This would make evaluation and adjustments possible and easier and their results can be propitiously utilized. **Girls and** young women should be more involved in women's affairs as decision makers for they are the adult women of tomorrow. So far, girls have not been given enough opportunity to participate fully in matters of women and development: their capabilities and potential contribution have been overlooked due to rigid traditional attitudes to generations.

c) The approach to the question of equality should not be global but should consider the context and realities of the respective societies; regional variations, social, cultural and religious differences. There is need to study in' understand various cultures, traditions, customs, taboos, etc. before change can be successfully effected.

d) Education curricula at all levels should incorporate women's roles in development and other issues on women deemed relevant to the various educational programmes.

e) Creation of employment for women should be given priority in all new plans along side education and training necessary for available jobs.

f) The mass media should be utilized much more effectively **as instruments** for modification of negative societal attitudes towards women and of women's attitudes towards themselves.